

Plea for Gesture Refused

LBJ-Ayub Talks Yield Little

By Chalmers M. Roberts
Washington Post Staff Writer

A couple of weeks ago President Johnson let out the word from the ranch on just how he intended to handle the visit of Pakistan's President Ayub. The initial indications last night were that it all went according to that plan.

Ayub was not very happy, according to Pakistani sources, to hear in advance that the President wanted to learn about Ayub's intentions toward both India and Communist China before talking about resumption of

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economic or military aid to Pakistan.

But Ayub adjusted and the two-days of talks here concentrated on the underlying political problems. As a result, Ayub went away as he came, on notice that Mr. Johnson wants above all a resolution of the quarrel with India and at least a new Pakistani tone toward China before he will make any new aid commitments.

Knowing that Washington has long felt Pakistan was

the aggrieved party in the Kashmir dispute, Ayub wisely adopted a most conciliatory tone, both in his Monday speech at the United Nations and in his talks here. He took a flexible position and there was Pakistani talk of some form of arbitration as a useful route to a settlement.

Mr. Johnson now will have this in mind when he talks with India's Premier Shastri in February, assuming that in the meantime Soviet mediation of the dispute at the Tashkent meeting in January does not produce a miracle.

Communist China was a different and much tougher issue. Ayub explained that his relations with Peking are no more than "normal" and "necessary" with such a big neighbor. It was added that Pakistan is not going Communist, that its intentions are democratic and its religion a further bar.

It is not yet clear just how far Mr. Johnson pressed Ayub for some sign of support, even of sympathy on the war in Vietnam. The results, in any case, were negative.

Ayub felt, and evidently made it clear, that he could give no such token without disrupting his friendly relationship with China. And that relationship, he feels, is vital as a counter to what the Pakistani see as an aggressive India.

Ayub thus would agree to nothing more in the joint communique than a hope that all conflicts in South-

east Asia "would be peacefully resolved."

Even to make a symbolic gesture, which Mr. Johnson would have dearly liked from Pakistan—a nation at least formally an ally—would have been to ask him to make an enemy of China, Ayub felt.

The Johnson approach, the determination to find out where Ayub may be headed on political matters, thus could only leave economics far behind. Ayub was hardly pleased but he could do nothing else but agree and hope the war in Vietnam would somehow end.

Mr. Johnson also had let it be known in advance that Congress was growing impatient over giving aid to a nation whose officials and press have had some hard words about the American effort in Vietnam.

Indications last night were that Ayub and his aides had promised to try to tone down such criticism, though they protested they had no more control over their press than Mr. Johnson has over his. Washington just does not accept that, however, and the words from Pakistan are now likely to be monitored more closely than ever.

In short, from all the visible signs the Ayub visit did not settle anything. But two Presidents, each of whom knows where he stands, at least have had a useful go at clearing away some of the mutual suspicions of the past couple of years.